

SENATE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 2783

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 27, 2008
Ways & Means, March 03, 2008

Title: An act relating to transfer and articulation between institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Regarding transfer and articulation between institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Wallace, Chase, Anderson, Sells, Haigh, Roberts, Hasegawa, Morrell, Sullivan, Kenney and Hudgins).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/08, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/21/08, 2/27/08 [DPA-WM].

Ways & Means: 3/3/08 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Shin, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Schoesler and Sheldon.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hatfield, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Oemig, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Tim Yowell (786-7435)

Background: The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is responsible for establishing a statewide transfer of credit policy and agreement, in cooperation with the public institutions of higher education and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). These entities created the Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA). Any student who completes an approved DTA Associate Degree at a community college is considered to have satisfied the lower division general education requirements at a public four-year institution.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

About 30 percent of the students transfer before completing their DTA Associate Degree. For these students, unless the community college has a special articulation agreement, each four-year institution makes a separate determination regarding whether their courses meet its general education requirements.

In the late 1990s, it was found that transfer students in science, math, and other highly structured majors did not graduate as efficiently as non-transfer students. The Council of Presidents (COP), the HECB, and the SBCTC convened a work group to develop a statewide Associate of Science Transfer Degree (AS-T), which was adopted in 2000. Under the AS-T, students take more math and science prerequisites while at the community college, with the objective of transferring directly into a major once they reach a four-year institution. More recently, the HECB asked that the Joint Access Oversight Group (JAOG) develop Major Related Programs (MRPs). An MRP specifies the prerequisite coursework that will provide the best preparation for entry into certain competitive majors. To date, the workgroups have completed MRPs in nursing, elementary and secondary education, pre-engineering, engineering technology, earth and space science, and construction management. In 2004 the HECB convened a work group that jointly established a strategy to create a single website through which students could determine equivalent courses for any public two- or four-year institution in the state. In its most robust form, web-based advising sites help students audit progress toward a degree, explore program requirements for different majors at different schools, chat online with transfer advisors, and apply for admission to institutions.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): The HECB must convene a work group to develop a list of rights guaranteed to students that have earned a Transfer Associate Degree under a direct transfer agreement. The list must be easily accessible on each institution's website as well as in admissions, transfer, and recruiting offices. The contents of the list are specified. This transfer of student's bill of rights must be implemented by September 2009. The work group must develop a system of identification for generally transferrable courses. The identifier must clearly distinguish courses that transfer from two-year institutions to four-year institutions, regardless of whether the student has completed a Transfer Associate Degree. Institutions must implement the system of identification by September 2009 and include it in course catalogs. The HECB must convene another new or existing work group to develop a detailed plan for developing and implementing a statewide web-based academic planning tool. The plan must include recommendations regarding the functions that should be included in the website and options for development. The HECB must report to the Legislature by December 15, 2008. The HECB must convene a broadly-representative work group to plan and implement a system for reporting on transfer student outcomes.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): The extent to which a course is transferable towards a 4-year degree is to be identified on institutional websites, in hard-copy catalogs, or through another means mutually agreeable among 2- and 4-year institutions. A work group is to plan and implement a system for reporting on transfer student outcomes.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): The development of a common set of course numbers for lower division courses that are generally accepted in transfer between institutions is

eliminated. The HECB is no longer required to convene a work group to develop a plan to monitor the progress and success of transfer students over time.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Engrossed Second Substitute Bill (Higher Education): PRO: Students need to know when and what classes are transferable. We need both manual and web-based advising systems because not all students have equal access to computers. The HECB has an on-going responsibility to advance web-based advising and the provisions in this bill would help. This will aid student mobility and access. It would add predictability. Web-based advising has the potential to provide a significant benefit while being relatively inexpensive.

OTHER: Common course numbering may cause students to limit their course choices unnecessarily when other courses may also be equally transferable. The bill implies the automatic acceptance of academic credit from non-accredited institutions. Common course numbering implies course conformity that does not currently exist between academic programs. The faculty and students should be in the institutional work groups instead of the statewide work group. Web-based advising provides the benefits of better student guidance without the problematic aspects of common course numbering.

Persons Testifying (Higher Education): PRO: Representative Wallace, prime sponsor; Ann Daley, HECB; Jake Stillwell, Sarah Ishmael, WSL; Greg Scheiderer, Independent Colleges of Washington.

OTHER: Cindy Morana, Council of Presidents; Loretta Seppanen, SBCTC; JW Harrington, Council of Faculty Representatives; Bernal Baca, AFTWA/UFWS; Wendy Rader Konofalski, WEA/UFWS.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: Private career colleges support the bill because they are included in it. Better information about course transferability will save students and the state money, because students will spend less time in courses that aren't transferrable. Both web- and paper-based systems should be used, because while students have access to computers in libraries and computer labs, there are often long lists to access them. Students today are more mobile and take multiple pathways to their degrees, so it is important to simplify the transfer process.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Steve Lindstrom, Northwest Career College Association; Sara Ishmael, Associated Students of Western Washington University; Jake Stilwell, Associated Students of Central Washington University.